

Missions

Dominican Republic

A Health Clinic with a Mission

Challenging Muslim Perceptions

51 Years of Service in Guatemala

Reaching Latinos through Audio Learning





Thinking It Through

DAVID DUNLAP

The Christmas Story According to Jesus

Have you ever read the Christmas story according to the Lord Jesus Christ? I don't mean the Christmas story according to Luke or Matthew, which we know well, but rather the Christmas story from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

If we could meet and interview the great figures connected to the birth of Christ, each of their descriptions of His arrival would be stirring and beautiful. Mary could describe the angel's appearance to her or the visit of the wise men. Elizabeth, Joseph, the magi, and the shepherds would each have their own unique perspective of the birth of Christ.

But what if we could find the account of the birth of Christ from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself? Our Lord's own account is in the Old Testament, in Psalm 40, and is repeated in Hebrews:

Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, 'Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God.'" (Hebrews 10:5-7)

Christ came to die

Here, the Lord Jesus unfolds His mission for when He would "come into the world." It cannot be said of any other person that he or she came into the world for a specific purpose. It is true that parents have aspirations for their children, but the

Christ's sacrifice should be our central focus during this Christmas season

came for one important reason: "I come to do Thy will, O God." What was that will? God desired that Christ be our Savior.

C. H. Spurgeon rightly urged that the doctrine of the death of Christ is not an arm of theology but the heart of it. Christ's sacrifice should be our central focus during this Christmas season! However, we as Christians often fail to emphasize this cru-

Lord Jesus Christ was entirely different. Our Lord says that He purposely

cial part of the nativity story. We focus so much on the birth of the baby Jesus and all the sentimentality that goes along with it. The manger scene, the wise men, the shepherds, the animals, and the gifts of the magi all seem to overwhelm the simple truth of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. Repeatedly, the writers of Scripture emphasize the fact that Jesus Christ came to die. The Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, who "being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:8) The angel said to Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

Christ came to pay

The Lord Jesus Christ not only came into the world to die for our sins, but He came to pay a ransom price no one else would pay. It is possible to have a noble purpose but be unable to accomplish it. Many have great aspirations; many have noble plans. But not only did the Lord Jesus have a noble mission from the Father, He was also uniquely able to accomplish that task by virtue of who He was. Unlike anyone else who has ever been born, He was not only man, He was incarnate God. Therefore, as a man He would be crucified by Roman law, but as holy God He died in order to pay the infinite price necessary for our salvation. We all have an infinite sin debt. The Psalmist writes, "No one can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for them—the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough." (Psalm 49:7-8) Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus Christ is uniquely able to pay our debt to God. We look at the moral requirement spelled out in Scripture. A redeemer must be sinless, righteous, and holy. All others fall far short. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) But then we hear the stirring words of the Lord Jesus Christ: "I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me), to do Thy will, O God'.... But this Man, after He offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God." (Hebrews 10:7, 12) So let us join the redeemed of all ages and the angels of heaven in exclaiming "Hallelujah, What a Savior!" ■

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COVER PHOTO: Woman in the Dominican Republic ©iStockPhoto.com/JCollado

Dominican Republic A Health Clinic with a Mission



BY SHARYN BRANSON

When God first led us into full-time overseas missions, I felt that my calling was to use my medical knowledge as a route to help the local people and share God's love and His Word. In October 2002 God opened the door for us to start a medical clinic in a mountain village in the Dominican Republic. God brought everything together and we found a small house, which the landlord agreed to let us use as a clinic, to rent for \$20 per month. The house was less than 400 square feet, but it had an open area for a waiting room and two very small bedrooms for consult rooms. Paul and two men from North Carolina came to help with rewiring and to fix the plumbing as well as build a bookcase, a cabinet for medications and an examination table. What a blessing! This was just one of many amazing things that God did to open the clinic.

A growing ministry

In February 2003 we opened the clinic, starting with about 12 hours per week. One of the main focuses for the clinic was to teach about God as well as health education and prevention of diseases. We would ask every patient about their faith and pray with them before they left. We charge a very small consult fee so our patients don't expect handouts, but we do our best to keep a stock of free medica-



tions that we can give our patients to treat what ails them.

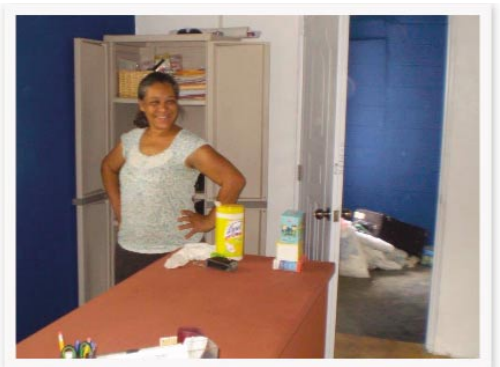
tions that we can give our patients to treat what ails them.

Over the next few years the clinic remained opened less than 20 hours per week. An internist, an optometrist and a dentist would come from the capital city once per week to see patients. To this day visiting specialists come to treat patients and share God's love and His Word.

Our goal was to first evangelize every patient and family member who walked through the door, then to treat them physically, educate them in order to prevent diseases, and to reach out to the Haitian community. Haitians living in the Dominican Republic have a fear of going to public places as many are in the country illegally and fear being sent back to Haiti.

Full-time staff

By late 2004 the number of patients had increased, and we needed help. We prayed and asked God to send someone who could work at the clinic and for the funds to pay his or her salary. God sent Ana Maria. She had never done administrative or nursing-related work, but she was willing. The best part is that she is a strong believer and not shy to share about God. And as patients waited to be seen by a doctor, Ana Maria would preach the Gospel to them, and no one left without being prayed for. Hearts were changed

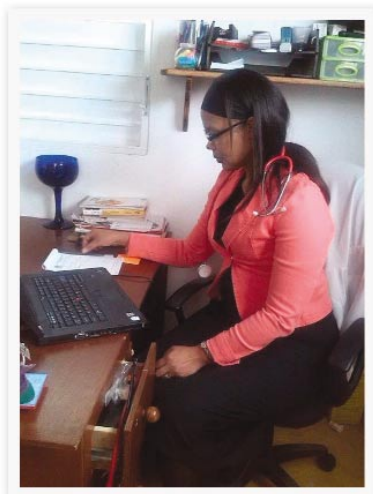


Top (L-R): A Haitian dad bringing his daughter to the clinic for treatment; Patients lining up outside the clinic's gate to see one of the visiting medical team doctors; Sharyn Branson talking with a young patient and his mother. **Above left:** Team from North Carolina gathering for morning prayer in the first clinic's waiting room. **Above right:** Ana Maria setting up her office area in the new clinic.

and we saw people returning to the clinic just for spiritual counseling, prayer or to enjoy the clinic's social atmosphere. Best of all we saw people ask Jesus into their hearts!

By 2007 we needed a full-time doctor. I talked with Ana Maria and we started to pray. About a week later Ana Maria gave me the number of someone that I had never heard of, Wendy, and told me to call her. I discovered that she was a local general medicine doctor, unhappy in her current location and praying for a change. After interviewing and a visit to the clinic, Wendy accepted a full-time position with us. We prayed about how to pay her salary and currently have 55 percent of her salary being sponsored. Wendy is still the main doctor and is in charge of all the medical aspects of the clinic. Ana Maria is now the administrator of not only the clinic, but also the ministry in the country. God amazes us with whom He has sent.

Since Wendy started working and ministering at the clinic, the number of patients has almost doubled. She shares the original vision of the clinic and will not let patients leave without praying with them. She, like Ana Maria, evangelizes every patient and tries to help them spiritually, as the Lord directs.



A new location

In January 2013 the landlord gave us six months' notice that we needed to move as he wanted his house back. We did not know what we were going to do and started to pray. God provided us another house to rent and convert into a clinic. This house is about 150 meters down the dirt road from the old location. It is 900 square feet with three rooms, so we now have a dedicated pharmacy, a kitchen area and another room for our ministry office. It has a large property and we have been able to plant a ministry garden to produce food that we give away to the poorest of the poor. God is so amazing!



Reaching Haitians

Today, the clinic has more than 14,000 patients. We continue to reach out to the Haitian community, and now about 30 percent of our patients are Haitians. When patients register and give their personal information, we're finding that entire families are coming all the way from Haiti, paying transport and taking days to travel, just to come to our clinic. We are very humbled by this! We work hard to ensure that we always have enough medication on hand to treat families' needs, so they can return home to Haiti with a consult, medications, hearing the Gospel and being prayed for.



Left (from top): Dr. Wendy writing a patient file after treatment; Ana Maria, Dr. Wendy and Mechy (clinic secretary). **Right (from top):** The new clinic; Medical team from Florida doing a medical and dental outreach.

Spiritual healing



House Upon the Rock Ministry staff.

The clinic has become a social point not only in this village but in the surrounding areas. People come to be seen by our doctors as well as to hang out for an hour or two to hear the Word, talk about God, or share about their lives with others in order to receive advice, help and prayer. We treat the physical and spiritual needs of everyone who comes. This is God's clinic and we thank Him every day for using us in this manner to share His love with everyone He sends to the clinic. ■



Sharyn and Paul Branson, commended by Saanichton Bible Fellowship, British Columbia, have served in the Dominican Republic since 1997. They have two children, Noah and Samantha.

MAY WE INTRODUCE

Ingrid Letendre • Missionary to Colombia



I grew up going to Bethel Bible Camp just outside Westlock, Alberta. This is where I first heard about Jesus's love for me and the price He paid for my sins. It was there that I met some of my best friends and people who mentored me through those tough teenage years. It is also where I developed a heart for camp ministry. When I was old enough to counsel, I spent my whole summers at camp.

I think I always wanted to be a missionary, even before I really knew what a missionary was. I had a love for children, even when I was still a child myself. I frequently babysat and was a Sunday school teacher and often preferred to hang out with kids than with adults; they brought me so much joy.

After I finished high school I went to Mount Carmel Bible School, which opened my eyes to the hurt and suffering that is in the world. Growing up outside a very small town, I had no idea that people lived on the street; spending time in Vancouver's inner city opened my eyes to the "real world" and stirred my heart to help and love others.

After my year at Mount Carmel, I went to Honduras for six months to work in an orphanage. I loved to hang out and play with the kids, getting and receiving endless hugs. I wasn't ready to come home, but I did. Less than two years later I went to Haiti to work in an orphanage for nine months.

Haiti was a difficult experience for me and I thought that maybe I wasn't cut out to be a missionary. So I finally went to uni-

versity to earn my bachelor's in social work. I was antsy during those four years and wanted something different. I would often think about missions, but remembered how tough Haiti was and I hoped that once I graduated and began a job this stirring in my heart would quiet. After I graduated, I came to Colombia in 2009 to work with Formando Vidas, which works with children who are at risk of ending up on the street, into drugs, gangs, violence or prostitution. At the end of my year commitment I once again didn't want to leave. But I came back to Canada and sought God and what He wanted for my life. I felt that I was called into full-time ministry. I considered full-time camp ministry, but felt the Lord leading me to return to Colombia.

Because Formando Vidas is an umbrella organization of Youth with a Mission, I first headed to Iquitos, Peru, in February 2011 to do a six-month discipleship training school. I realized there why God wanted me back in Colombia; He wanted me to start a camp for at-risk children. After a lot of prayer, for about two years, we held our first Camp Gozo (which means joy in Spanish) in October 2013. We rented a farm and brought 28 girls, ages 12 to 16. It was an amazing time where the girls could experience the joy and love of their Father. The plan is for Camp Gozo to grow until we eventually have our own land. I am excited to see what God does with Camp Gozo, and to be able to experience the hearts and lives that He will change. ■

Documentary Films Challenging Muslim Perceptions



BY ROGER MALSTEAD

Some years ago I felt that we needed to respond to the allegations of Muslims (and others, mainly liberal theologians) that the Gospels have been changed or corrupted through the centuries. I shared these thoughts with Dr. Ronald Clements, author of *Lives from a Black Tin Box* and other missionary biographies, and this resulted in *The Jesus Accounts* documentary.

Ronald Clements carried out research and wrote a script. Trusts and other sources in the U.K. and the U.S. raised 30,000 euros to finance the project. We were delighted to obtain interviews with evangelical scholars at Cambridge, Dr. Peter Head and Dr. Simon Gathercole, and also with the then Bishop



Clockwise from top: Istanbul filming; Dr. Larry Hurtado being filmed; East Gate, Nicaea; Istanbul filming.

of Rochester, Michael Nazir-Ali. We were able to film and obtain photographs of several ancient manuscripts of the Gospels including a portion of John's Gospel, the famous John Rylands papyrus from about A.D. 125.

The Jesus Accounts has now been dubbed into more than 20 languages. It has been aired on TV in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, German, Russian and Ukrainian, and it is also available online. We have produced 10,000 DVDs of the film in Turkish, and they are being distributed by churches, by a Christian distribution firm and by Campus Crusade for Christ. This version was used by an English woman, whose Muslim daughter-in-law made a profession of faith, partially due to the influence of the film. We continue to pray that it will be used as a tool to counter the false Muslim allegations about Scripture.

Another encouraging development was a request from a German group (*Christliche Literatur-Verbreitung*), who asked for permission to translate the film into German for their evangelistic outreaches. When the German group heard that *The Jesus Accounts* was available in other languages, they also included the soundtracks from the Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Russian versions, making them accessible to many more people. The film was also aired on German TV.

In Pakistan, progress is being made in producing copies of the Urdu version of *The Jesus Accounts* (*Yesu ke Beyanat*). The brother working on this project is duplicating the film manually onto Micro SanDisk cards and is acquiring a duplicator machine so that this process will become cheaper and more efficient. The film can be downloaded and it is available on smartphones. We also hope to broadcast it on satellite TV.

In December 2013 *The Jesus Accounts* in Russian went live on our Web portal, ca7.tv. The initial response was positive and we were asked by an expatriate to consider including this video on a resource DVD to be distributed with new Central Asian Russian Bibles, which were being printed at the beginning of this year. As a result, 54,000 DVDs have now been shipped to Russia, each with a contextualized Bible or a children's Bible. So this venture is already producing fruit in the most difficult regions of the world.

Jesus, Son of God

As many know, Muslims "see red" when Christians, or anyone, use the phrase, "Jesus, the Son of God." After observing this phenomenon and having many debates with Muslims in Turkey over the years, the possibility occurred to me that we could produce a second short documentary, clearly stating what Christians believe on this topic and why. The new film is called *Jesus, Son of God?* Ronald Clements also worked on this project and we hope to have it dubbed into various languages such as Arabic, Persian and Turkish.

A number of people were interviewed for the film: Dr. Larry Hurtado (University of Edinburgh), Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali (now president of OXTRAD), Martin Goldsmith (Muslim expert) and Dr. Krish Kandiah (Evangelical Alliance). Also, last year, Ronald Clements and the film's onscreen presenter, Luke Waldock, traveled to Turkey where they filmed at the ancient site of Nicaea (where the Council of Nicaea was held). They also filmed in biblical Pontus near the Black Sea. We have recorded voice-overs with two narrators: Nick Page, a former BBC radio presenter, and Beth Grove, a worker associated with Echoes of Service, U.K.

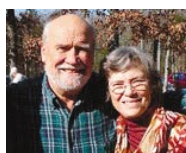
The documentary deals with the fundamental objections that Muslims raise over the question of Jesus as the Son of God: that this belief was a product of the Council at Nicaea in A.D. 325, that God could not have had relations with Mary and that Jesus was only a prophet.

The film shows that belief in Jesus as the Son of God can be traced back from the Nicene Council, through the writings of the Roman Governor Pliny (A.D. 61 – c. 113) and the early Church fathers, and through the evidence conveyed in the Epistles which points to the resurrection. It also deals with what Christians mean by "Jesus, Son of God." An interview with Dr. Larry Hurtado, author of *How On Earth Did Jesus Become God?*, explains how strict monotheists, like Jesus's disciples, came to equate Jesus with God, making statements such as: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

The documentary also examines the evidence of the Old Testament that God will dwell with His people. Finally, the film considers what Jesus said about Himself. We believe that Jesus performed many miracles, such as the calming of the storm and the raising of Lazarus, and these are part of the reason we give for believing that Jesus is God. Additionally, non-Christians, such as the governor Pliny, observed this belief. Writing to Rome to find out how to prosecute these Christians, he stated their crime: they meet to "sing a hymn to Christ as to a god."

Watch the films

If you're interested in knowing more, watching either film, or sharing this information with your Muslim or doubting friends, visit the websites: www.TheJesusAccounts.tv and www.JesusSonOfGodFilm.com. ■



Roger and Yvonne Malstead are commended from the assemblies in LaGrange, Illinois, and Shelbyville, Tennessee.

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Celebrating 51 years of service in Guatemala

A tribute to our parents Dr. James and Carla Cocking

BY RUTH COCKING, SARAH COCKING, SETH COCKING, AND MARTHA FOWLER

Ruth remembers the day when our three living grandparents stood and waved as our family drove away. She was five years old, Seth was three and Martha was six months old. Our Suburban SUV and travel trailer made it through Mexico and into Guatemala. The plan was to travel to Costa Rica and later Colombia, but trailer axle problems gave us our first Christmas season in Guatemala.

There was a cold night in the car, hospitality from local missionaries, hot tea boiling on a wood burning stove, Guatemalan “tamales” (which we only looked at and our mother barely tasted) and marimba music in the decorated hotel. After more trailer problems, Dad started working on his Guatemalan medical license.

We learned Spanish in parking lots while waiting in the car. We lived in a variety of places including a small house next to a candy store, where we lacked privacy, but learned a lot of Spanish. We finally moved into our own home. It still had dirt floors, but it was ours! It was to this home that we later

brought our baby sister Sarah.

Our dad had three clinics. Quiche Indian families would often stumble in with very little hope. One parent might be barely able to walk; the other parent might be carrying two sick babies and dragging along a toddler. They knew their disease was potentially fatal because they had already lost family members. Thanks to the witch doctor, their money and chickens were gone and their minds were full of fear of evil spirits. They had burned candles to gain healing from Mary or baby Jesus and had seen crosses but never knew their significance. They had been sold pills which were useless. They had tried drinking moonshine to numb the pain. They might have a few apples and eggs, gifts from worried grandparents, but they doubted an American doctor would receive that for payment.

They would approach the clinic and hear singing in their native tongue: singing by one of their own people, but singing with death so near? They would watch our mother's fingers touch the keys on the portable organ and learn that she was the

doctor's wife. The singer would greet them with the warmth of a good friend and gently tell them that Jesus had died for their sins on the cross. They would be invited into a little room where the big white doctor sat behind a rustic desk. His humble smile would ease their fears a little. His huge white hands would prove to be the gentlest they had ever seen. They would be given appropriate medications. The doctor and his helper would carefully explain what to do and expect. He would address problems they did not have the courage to mention.

"The singer would greet them with the warmth of a good friend and gently tell them that Jesus had died for their sins on the cross."

He never charged for his services, and Mother would beam ear to ear as she exclaimed that apples were a fine payment for antibiotics! Eggs were returned to be fed to the children. Mother might give the family sandwiches, cookies, and booklets with Bible story drawings. They would be invited to listen to the radio programs and to come back and watch a film on the life of Christ. If it was late in the day, they might be given a ride home. No longer hopeless, the family would arrive home warm and well fed just as the benefits of the medications began to help.

On evenings before Christmas, there were special meetings at the clinics with sometimes 100 or more in attendance. Each family received a calendar with Scripture verses made by our family, sweet bread, and hot chocolate which we transported with much laughter and many mishaps up the mountain roads. Christmas Eve also came to mean special gospel programming on the radio. It meant driving home tired, sticky and happy to savor the very same type of "tamales" of our first Guatemalan Christmas and to enjoy the neighborhood fireworks display at midnight.

We are so privileged to be part of our parents' ministry and interactions with the Quiche people. We have the legacy of a mother who is always concerned with people's physical needs.

She played hymns for the radio programs that have reached more people than we will ever know in this life. She spent 15 years typing the Bible in the Quiche Indian language and doing data entry work for the arduous revision

process. We have a dad who was there to guide us, HC (our Quiche Indian coworker), and many others toward understanding and applying the Bible in daily life.

Our parents pointed us in the right direction and allowed us to find the truth. We have a deeper faith in God as a result of the approach they took. We learned that life is not all about us and that true satisfaction comes from obeying God and living our lives in a way that helps others. Our parents think about the life to come, unconcerned with the rewards of this life.

Dad constantly shares the Gospel one-on-one. People tell him that he has surely earned a place in heaven through his selfless missionary work and this gives him an opening to explain that there is no way for a sinner like him to earn heaven. He says, "God gave me a place in heaven when I was just a naughty little seven year old. Jesus paid for my place in heaven with His blood. All I could do was believe."

We know that there are many people like you standing behind our family with love and prayers. We are thankful for our parents' beautiful marriage, for what they mean to the Indians, and that our experiences as children served to draw each of us to the Savior and to each other in the bond of love and trust we still enjoy. ■

Ruth Cocking, First Baptist Church, Cleveland, Texas; Sarah Cocking, Manvel Bible Chapel, Pearland, Texas; Seth Cocking, Washington County Bible Church, Brenham, Texas; and Martha Fowler, Overbrook Gospel Chapel, Greenville, South Carolina.

Opposite page: Photos of James and Carla throughout their ministry. **Above:** James and Carla today.



"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart...And these words...You shall teach them diligently to your children."

Deuteronomy 6:5-7

Reaching Latinos through Audio Learning

I have fond memories of traveling over dusty, bumpy roads in “Old Red,” a ’76 Land Cruiser Wagon, as we listened to Mom read stories. I enjoyed listening to books, but rarely enjoyed reading them. Growing up as a missionary kid in Bolivia taught me to straddle the gap between two worlds—appreciating my parents’ American culture as well as my own Latino culture. One great difference is in learning styles; the first is book-oriented and the latter is mainly driven by auditory learning.

In the United States, where many have more books than pieces of clothing, we often correlate education to books. If one of my Latino friends were to walk into your average U.S. public library, his jaw might drop open at seeing such an expansive array of books! Working in the Latin American context presents a unique challenge, as Christian materials are few and far between not to mention expensive to obtain. A great percentage of this material is translated, and finding translations that accurately portray an author’s original meaning into another language is quite a task. Grasping C.S. Lewis in English can be hard enough for most, while taking it to another language makes it almost unreadable because of the imagery and idioms used.

In my experience in Bolivia, people tend to learn best through auditory means and memorization. People have few books, and if we gave them more, most would say “how nice” and let them collect dust. Ask your average American student which he would prefer: to memorize five obscure Bible verses or to read three pages in a Bible commentary. Most would choose to read, whereas most in the Latin

American context would choose the memorization.

Serving as a missionary to Bolivia, one of the greatest challenges I face in teaching and preaching is to go beyond educating in order to truly inspire the listener with a love for God’s Word—a hunger to esteem, study, and be molded by it. Peter describes Scripture as “living and abiding.” (1 Peter 1:23) In a similar vein, Paul desires us to have it dwell in us “richly.” (Colossians 3:16) Our goal is to make the Book of books contagious, that it might live in our minds and change our lifestyle.

A need met

This begs the question, how can we inspire Latinos to love learning about the Bible? Are there any robust alternatives to book learning?

Since I often travel to preach, over time I return to the same churches. It always amazes me when a brother makes a reference to a message I preached months or even a year ago. It can be a little embarrassing to have someone else remember the details, when I can’t even remember what passage I preached on! Can you remember what was preached three Sundays ago? Let’s just say that’s not America’s forte.

In general, people in the Latino context are excellent auditory learners, and it makes me think that perhaps we should use this learned trait to the benefit of the Church. After all, didn’t Paul adapt his presentation of the Gospel depending on the culture he interacted with (1 Corinthians 9:20-21)?

A couple of years ago the local Christian radio station asked me to come and do some recording. At first it was



slow-going and very challenging—sitting in an empty room with just a microphone staring me in the face while I talk to myself, surely can't be a sane thing to do! Thanks to the excellent work of the radio editor, and after a great investment of time, more than 120 hours of material have been recorded there. This radio station as well as several others in Bolivia and Peru regularly broadcast this material.

During this time, a friend asked if he could get a certain series copied onto a CD for him, since he had missed part of it. Later, another person asked the same thing, and so an idea began to evolve in my mind. I decided to put this initial material on a CD, in a condensed format, and take it to a church to see if anyone else wanted it. The CD had about 25 hours of

material on it and I decided to sell it at about cost. They all sold and soon I started to make more and more copies of this material. More often than not, they sold out no matter how many I brought with me.



Two years have passed since that idea started to grow, and one CD turned into five CDs, and now it's been packaged into one DVD. Nearly 2,000 CDs and DVDs have now been sold, mainly in Bolivia and Peru, and the demand continues strong.

A desire to learn

Even with the success, one big question loomed—were people actually listening and learning from the material, or was it, too, just collecting dust?

One young lady came up to me at church over a year ago, asking when I was going to make more material; she had already listened to it all on her way to school every morning. Later, a couple in Peru asked me to visit them at their restaurant. When I came by, they took turns cooking and asking me seemingly endless questions on the material I had recorded, which ranges from Church history, to apologetics, to Bible expositions on a variety of books. They had listened to 120 hours of material—twice! A few weeks ago, a mother asked for more material, as she had given away more than a dozen to a variety of neighbors and coworkers. She needed

more for the weekly Bible study she had started. The women sit and listen to a 30-minute segment and then discuss it together. Just last year, a missionary brother in Peru, as we unexpectedly met, pulled out his earbud and told me to listen—I smiled as I heard my own voice!

There are more such stories, not to mention receiving messages or emails with questions and comments about the material. It is such a privilege to be able to reach so many people; may God inspire them, educate them, and encourage them through this material. It's also incredibly humbling to remember James's warning: "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness." (James 3:1)

Most recently, in an attempt to broaden the reach of this ministry, a brother saw an opportunity and helped me build a website as a virtual Spanish library to host this material as well as that of other brothers. There, the visitor can listen online, share it with others, or download the material free of charge without having to obtain permission. Recently, this brother told me that the website had more regular visits than any other website he had built—and he does this for a living!

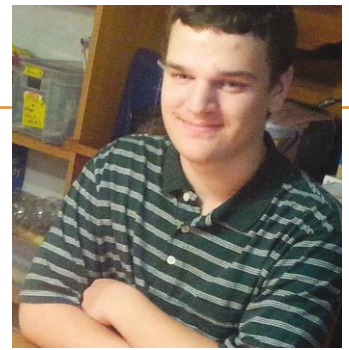
Please pray that God would bless this ministry to inspire the Spanish-speaking community to love God's Word more, to be better equipped to do God's work! ■

Free Spanish Resource

Recursos Cristianos is a website that works as a virtual library to host a wide variety of Spanish Christian materials both in audio and written format. It includes teaching on church history, Christian apologetics, Bible exposition, various sermons, and audiobooks. Visit this site to download materials free of charge and share it with others—www.RecursosCristianos.info.



Christopher Mattix, son of missionaries Mark and Carol Mattix, serves in Bolivia with a passion for preaching, teaching, and radio broadcasting. He was commended in 2013 by the assembly in Lynnwood, Washington.



The Power of Prayer

BY JOSHUA T. SWAIM

Prayer is often neglected in Christianity today. It has become merely a ritual; something polite to do for those going through difficult times. However, the power of prayer is limitless just as the power of God is limitless. If we would cry out to God, He would hear and move. God hears and answers earnest, consistent, believing prayer.

Earnest

God hears earnest prayer because it shows true desire. Do you want God to work? Then earnestly pray that He will. Elijah is a prime example of what can result from earnest prayer. Elijah "was a man with a nature like ours," but he knew that God had promised to shut up the skies if Israel turned to other gods. Therefore, Elijah "prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months." Another great example of earnest prayer was given by Daniel, who prayed "with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes" just before the angel Gabriel appeared to him. Jesus prayed earnestly in Gethsemane and was comforted by an angel from God. God hears those who truly want Him to hear.

Consistent

God hears consistent prayer because it shows consistent desire instead of passing fancy. Elijah again serves as a great example of one who prayed consistently. He prayed seven times that it would rain again before even one little cloud came up over the sea. Another example is the story of the blind men in Matthew 20. They cried out again and again until Jesus heard them and gave them their sight. In one of Jesus's parables, He spoke of a widow who went consistently to a judge until she got justice. Do not think you will be heard because you use many words; consistent prayer will be heard by God.

Believing

God hears believing prayer because it shows reliant desire. Believing prayer is throwing oneself completely on God's power, knowing that He will answer. Yet again, Elijah is an excellent example of believing prayer. After he prayed that God would shut up the heavens, he went straight to the king. He did not wait at home to see if his prayer would be

answered; he believed God. Hannah gave another example of believing prayer. After she prayed to God for a son, she left happily, knowing God had heard her. All who came to Jesus with faith were healed. God hears believing prayer.

God will hear

God is infinitely powerful, and He is willing to work in awesome ways. Do not make light of God's gifts; if you want to make a difference, if you want revival or if you want God to work, then ask Him earnestly and consistently with faith. God will hear. ■



Joshua, age 15, is Mark and Tami Swaim's oldest son. The Swaims, listed in Other Overseas Service, live in Pennsylvania and serve the Lord in Poland.

26 Below

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eTeams 2015 Short-term Missions Trips



BY RON HAMPTON

A ministry of MSC Canada, eTeams has various short-term missions trips planned for the coming year. Please pray for us and consider if the Lord would have you serve with eTeams.

OUR MISSION

We seek to glorify God by enabling and equipping Christians to effectively cross cultures, encourage the national church and evangelize in English.

OUR MODEL

English-speaking: In order to be an effective witness in a foreign country you need to know the language. This is especial-

ly true of short-term missionaries. Therefore, we only place teams where the population can understand English.

Experienced leaders: We provide our teams with orientation, teaching and training, but the most effective way to learn evangelism is by working alongside the gifted and experienced evangelists, missionaries and national believers who work with our teams.

Ensured Follow-up: While our witness can be effective even in the short-term, in order to see long-term results our teams only work where there are existing churches and/or resident missionaries to follow up our short-term efforts.

Country	Dates	Leader	Missionary Liaisons	Ministry Plan
Jamaica	January 8-24	Tim Hood	Calvin Cowell & local elders	The team will minister to five Montego Bay area assemblies, some in rural settings, assisting them with outreach using various evangelism methods.
Belize	March 11-25	Sean O'Byrne	Local elders	The team will work closely with Belize City assemblies, assisting with outreach including door-to-door, literature distribution, gospel meetings and youth ministry.
Ghana	May 8-25	Tim Hood	Daniel & Priscilla Webster	Hosted by Believers Bible Assembly, Kumasi, the team will share the Gospel at school assemblies, in classrooms, in the open air, and on the streets.
Ireland *BEC	May 29- June 16	Ron Hampton & Tim Hood	Frank Carolan & others including the Burnetts & Moriaritys	Hosted by two first-generation assemblies, the team will assist with outreach using door-to-door, open air, literature distribution, and youth work. They will also minister to the assemblies with teaching, singing and testimonies.
Ireland	July 24- August 10	David Wilson	Frank Carolan & David Wilson	Hosted by two first-generation assemblies, the team will help with ministry and outreach work including literature distribution, open air and children's work.

* The fourth annual Biblical Eldership Conference organized and sponsored by eTeams will take place during this time.

2014 TAX RECEIPTS

December gifts to CMML and MSC Canada will receive a receipt for 2014 income tax returns if they are postmarked by December 31, 2014.

HOLIDAY NOTICE

The CMML office will be closed December 25-26, 2014, and January 1-2, 2015. The MSC Canada office will be closed December 25, 2014 through January 2, 2015.